

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method of communication between a first client and a second client in a client-server network wherein the second client is allocated an interactive file, the method comprising:

5 identifying the second client with a first identifier of the second client;  
determining, based on the first identifier of the second client, a second identifier of the second client;

10 establishing, based on the second identifier of the second client, a communication link between the first client and the second client if the second client is connected to the network; and

establishing, based on the second identifier of the second client, a communication link between the first client and the interactive file of the second client if the second client is disconnected from the network.

15 2. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein determining the second identifier includes determining a network address of the second client based on a name of the second client.

3. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising communicating a name of the second client to a domain name system (DNS) server, and obtaining an Internet protocol (IP) address of the second client from the DNS server.

20 4. The method as defined in Claim 3, further comprising updating the DNS server with a current IP address of the second client, the IP address being identifiable by the domain name of the second client.

25 5. The method as defined in Claim 4, further comprising temporarily re-directing, when updating the DNS server, DNS service of the DNS server to another DNS server.

6. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising monitoring arrival of a signal that is periodically transmitted by the second client to the server, the arrival of the signal indicating that the second client is on-line.

30 7. The method as defined in Claim 6, further comprising determining that the second client is off-line if the signal is not received within a predetermined time interval.

8. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein establishing a communication link between the first client and the interactive file includes accessing a Web page that is configured to provide information to the first client and allow the first client to leave a message to the second client.

5 9. The method as defined in Claim 8, further comprising allowing the second client to modify contents of the Web page.

10. A system for communicating among a plurality of clients in a client-server network, the system comprising:

10 a first client that is configured to communicate with a second client via the network, the second client establishing communication with the first client by identifying the first client with a first identifier of the first client, wherein the first client is allocated an interactive file; and

15 at least one server in communication with the first client, the server being configured to identify the first client by a second identifier of the client, and further configured to direct the second client to the first client when the client is on-line and direct the second client to the interactive file when the first client is off-line.

11. The system as defined in Claim 10, wherein the first identifier includes a name of the first client, and the second identifier includes a network address of the first client.

20 12. The system as defined in Claim 10, wherein the server comprises a domain name system (DNS) server that is configured to identify the first client by an Internet protocol (IP) address and, in response to receiving from the second client the domain name of the first client, communicate the IP address to the second client.

25 13. The system as defined in Claim 12, wherein the DNS server is configured to update an IP address table with a current IP address of the first client and identify the IP address of the first client based on the domain name of the first client.

14. The system as defined in Claim 13, wherein the DNS server is configured to temporarily re-direct, when updating the DNS server, DNS service to another DNS server.

15. The system as defined in Claim 10, wherein the server is configured to monitor arrival of a signal that is periodically transmitted by the first client to the server, the arrival of the signal indicating that the first client is on-line.

5 16. The system as defined in Claim 15, wherein the server is configured to determine that the first client is off-line if the signal is not received within a predetermined time interval.

17. The system as defined in Claim 10, wherein the interactive file includes a Web page that is configured to provide information to the second client and allow the second client to leave a message to the first client.

10 18. The system as defined in Claim 16, wherein the server is configured to allow the first client to modify contents of the Web page.

19. A system for communicating between a first client and a second client in a client-server network wherein the second client is allocated an interactive file, the system comprising:

15 means for identifying the second client with a first identifier of the second client;  
means for determining, based on the first identifier of the second client, a second identifier of the second client;

means for establishing, based on the second identifier of the second client, a communication link between the first client and the second client if the second client is connected to the network; and

20 means for establishing, based on the second identifier of the second client, a communication link between the first client and the interactive file of the second client if the second client is disconnected from the network.

25 20. The system as defined in Claim 19, wherein means for determining the second identifier includes means for determining a network address of the second client based on a name of the second client.

21. The system as defined in Claim 19, further comprising means for communicating a name of the second client to a domain name system (DNS) server, and obtaining an Internet protocol (IP) address of the second client from the DNS server.

22. The system as defined in Claim 23, further comprising means for updating the DNS server with a current IP address of the second client, the IP address being identifiable by the domain name of the second client.

23. The system as defined in Claim 19, further comprising means for monitoring arrival of a signal that is periodically transmitted by the second client to the server, the arrival of the signal indicating that the second client is on-line.

24. The system as defined in Claim 23, further comprising means for determining that the second client is off-line if the signal is not received within a predetermined time interval.

25. A method of communication between a first client and a second client in a client-server computer network, wherein the second client is provided with an interactive file, the method comprising:

accepting a request for communication with the first client via the network based, at least in part, on identifying the second client by an identifier that is equivalent to a network address of the second client;

establishing, based on the network address of the second client, a communication link between the first client and the second client if the second client is connected to the network; and

establishing, based on the network address of the second client, a communication link between the first client and the interactive file of the second client if the second client is disconnected from the network.

26. The method as defined in Claim 25, wherein accepting a request includes identifying the second client by a name of the second client.

27. A method of communication between a first client and a second client in a client-server computer network, wherein the second client is provided with an interactive file, the method comprising:

receiving from the second client a request for connecting to the network;

communicating a network address of the second client to a server, which is configured to store the network address with an identifier of the second client;

establishing, based on receiving the identifier of the second client from the first client, a communication link between the first client and second client if the second client is connected to the network; and

5 establishing, based on receiving the identifier of the second client from the first client, a communication link between the first client and the interactive file of the second client if the second client is disconnected from the network.

28. The method as defined in Claim 27, wherein communicating a network address of the second client includes matching the network address with the name of the second client.

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